Roosevelt Base, Net Pier (Pier 7)
Corner of Richardson Avenue and Idaho Street
Long Beach
Los Angeles County
California

HABS No. CA-2663-L

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROOSEVELT BASE, NET PIER (Pier 7)

HABS No. CA-2663-L

Location: Corner of Richardson Avenue and Idaho Street, Naval Station Long Beach,
Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California

U.S.G.S. Long Beach Quadrangles (7.5")

Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM)
Coordinates: 11.385330.3735290

Significance: The Roosevelt Base Historic District, constructed in 1940-1943, consists of 11 buildings designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival detailing, five structures, and extensive historic landscaping. It is eligible for the National Register for its site planning, landscaping, architectural style, and its Associate Architect Paul Williams, a nationally prominent Los Angeles Afro-American architect. Additionally, the District is significant for its association with the buildup of permanent Naval facilities on the Pacific Coast under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, during the mobilization period preceding the United States' entry into World War II.

Pier 7 was originally used as a net pier for Roosevelt Base. Over the years it has been changed and refurbished to fit different activities in the harbor and the shipyard. The removal of the original concrete ramp and cleats and bollards, and the covering of the railroad tracks have compromised its integrity.

Description: The Net Pier, 80' wide by 687'6" long, consists of 50 structural steel "H" beam pile bents spaced 14" on center. Each bent consists of 12 steel "H" piles 14" square and 90' long driven vertically and, on either side, two piles 14" square by 100' long driven at a 45 degree angle. These piles are encased to below the water line with 24" square concrete posts. The tops of the steel piles are connected by reinforced concrete beams and covered with a deck slab coated with asphalt. Raised utility channels of concrete, and concrete sidewalks extend the length of the pier on each side. Creosoted Douglas fir log fenders protect the sides of the pier. Remains of a concrete ramp at the end of the pier are still visible. Twenty cylindrical paired bollards made of metal, 10 per side, and 13 modern cobra head pole lamps are located along the sides of the pier. There are three electrical substations: two, painted green and gray and connected by a flat metal roof, are on the east section of the pier (300 ft. out). The other substation, painted green, is on the west section at 520 ft. out. At the pier's entrance on Idaho Street there is one

temporary entry booth of aluminum and glass with a flat roof. Next to this booth on the east side are utility pipes.

Alterations. The original iron bollards and metal cleats have been replaced with new cylindrical paired bollards. Most of the train tracks are covered and not used. The original concrete ramp has been removed. The electrical substations, pipe channels, pole lamps and the sentry booth are all new additions to the pier. There is only one original bollard remaining, at the west side of the ramp to the water.

Historical Context: Construction of the pier was begun in 1941, after that portion of the bay had been dredged to a depth of 65 feet. The steel piles were driven into the bottom of the bay with a steam hammer on a steam-powered floating rig. The tops of these steel piles were encased in 24" square cement posts, using wood forms. These forms were slid down each pile, and the bottom sealed with grout to keep out the water. Water was then pumped from the forms around the steel piles before the concrete was formed.

A temporary timber construction deck was built along the west side of the pier, from which sectional forms for the beams and deck slab were put in place, reinforced steel bars were set and tied by hand, and concrete poured in them. The concrete ramp at the end was formed and poured elsewhere and then lowered into position. Portions of the pier were then further protected by a system of creosoted wood fenders, driven into the ground with a steam-operated hammer operating from a floating rig. Fourteen cleats and six bollards, of painted steel, were attached along the edges of the pier. Two railroad tracks running the length of the pier were constructed. (Bureau of Yards and Docks 1944: 201-202; Architectural Plans January 17, 1941).

The construction of the Net Pier was part of a plan to provide recreational and administrative facilities for the Pacific Fleet anchored in San Pedro harbor. The construction of this complex was part of a nationwide military effort to replace deteriorating World War I temporary buildings with new permanent facilities to attract and retain post-war peacetime forces. Rather than using a standard design from the Bureau of Yards and Docks, the Navy, through Allied Engineers, hired local civilian architects Adrian Wilson and Paul R. Williams. As a result the buildings, designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival details, are unique to the Base.

Construction of this complex, named Roosevelt Base, took place between 1940 and 1943, and cost $18 million, funded by Congressional appropriations. Included were the gymnasium (23), squash/handball courts and locker rooms (22), a swimming pool (233) and tennis courts (221), arcade (234), lounge and bowling alley (20), officers' club (24), and fleet landing building (10), administration building (1), dispensary (2), fire station (3), central heating plant (4), labor board building (41),

gatehouse (40), and main gates (gate 1), and a net pier (pier 7, structure 126), and extensive landscaping.

Although designed in 1940 as recreation facilities for personnel of the Pacific Fleet, the complex was not used initially for this purpose. In response to Japan's increasing belligerence toward China, President Roosevelt, (for whom the Base was named) ordered the fleet from San Pedro Bay to Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii to serve as a deterrence and warning. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Base was rushed to completion; new temporary barracks were constructed, and the facilities were used during World War II as support for a Small Craft Training Center and as the administrative center of the Naval Operating Base in Long Beach.

The Net Pier was part of the Naval Depot that included the pier and a Net Storage building with net storage yard and net weaving slab along 6th Street (now Idaho Street) to the north of the pier. A Union Pacific Railroad spur connected the building to the net pier. A second spur line on the pier connected to the Naval Drydocks area. The Net Depot was established as a receiving station for net equipment as well as a trans-shipment station. By 1945 all net activity was transferred from Roosevelt Base to the U.S. Naval Ammunition and Net Depot at Seal Beach, California, and the Net Pier was used for District Small Craft, the training ships of the Small Craft Training Center, the loading of planes for shipment, and other miscellaneous uses. Occasionally the east side of the pier was used by the Shipyard.

After World War II the facilities, renamed Naval Station Long Beach, were used to support the U.S. Navy ships' personnel either homeported in Long Beach or in drydock for repairs at the adjacent Naval Shipyard. In 1991 the Naval Station was listed for closure as part of the national Base Re-Use and Closure activities as the Department of Defense down-sized at the end of the Cold War. In 1994 the Base officially closed, although a number of buildings are still in use.

Sources:

Original architectural drawings #31265, #31266, #31267, #31268, #31269, #31270, #31271, and #31272 are located at Building 300, Long Beach Naval Shipyard Archives. They date to January 17, May 22, and September 10, 1941.

Archiplan Urban Design Collaborative. 1987. *Terminal Island Long Beach Naval Complex, Long Beach, California: Update of Engineering Evaluation for Naval Station: Long Beach, California.* Revised April 1988, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Long Beach Naval Station. Contract N624-86-C-5263.

Manley, William, Carson Anderson, and Susan M. Hector. 1994. *Historical and Architectural Assessment - Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California.* San Diego, California. Contract Number N68711-92-M-4893.

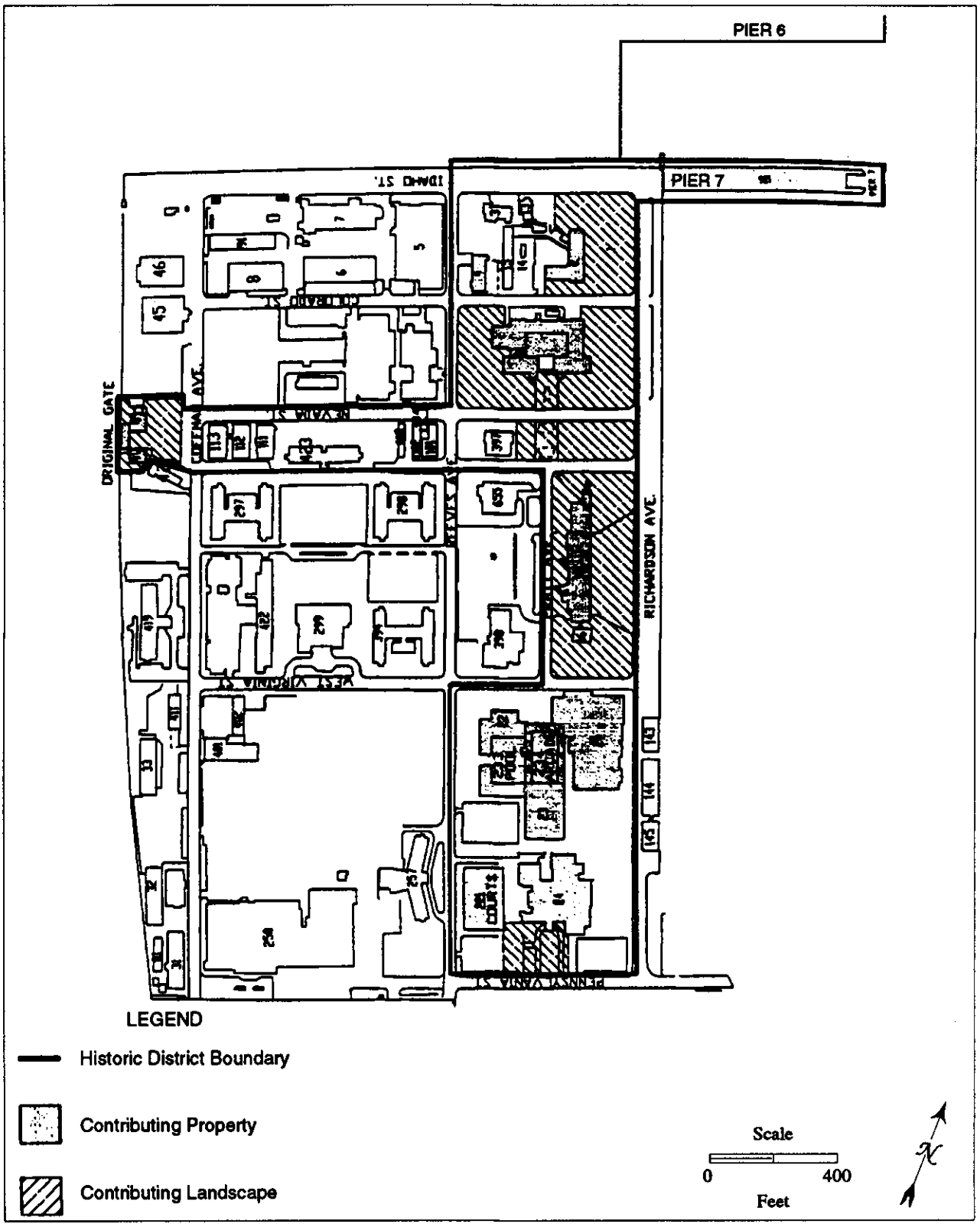
Property Record Card: NAV. S. and A. Form 277

"Roosevelt Naval Base, Terminal Island: Headquarters of The Naval Operating Base, Terminal Island, Long Beach Harbor." 1944. *Architectural Record* May: 58-70.

Todd Erickson. Interview with Alexandra C. Cole, 29 March 1996, Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California.

Project Information: This HABS documentation project was undertaken as a mitigative recording required by the Memorandum of Agreement, dated _____ 1996, signed by the City of Long Beach, the California State Preservation Officer and the Navy. The Navy proposes to transfer the Naval Station property to the City of Long Beach. The City, through the Port of Long Beach, plans to demolish all the buildings and structures on Roosevelt Base for a container terminal.

The documentation was prepared by Alexandra C. Cole, SAIC, Santa Barbara, architectural historian and Fermina B. Murray, historian, in May 1996. Large-format photography was done by William B. Dewey of Santa Barbara, California, in April 1996.



ROOSEVELT BASE HISTORIC DISTRICT, PIER 7